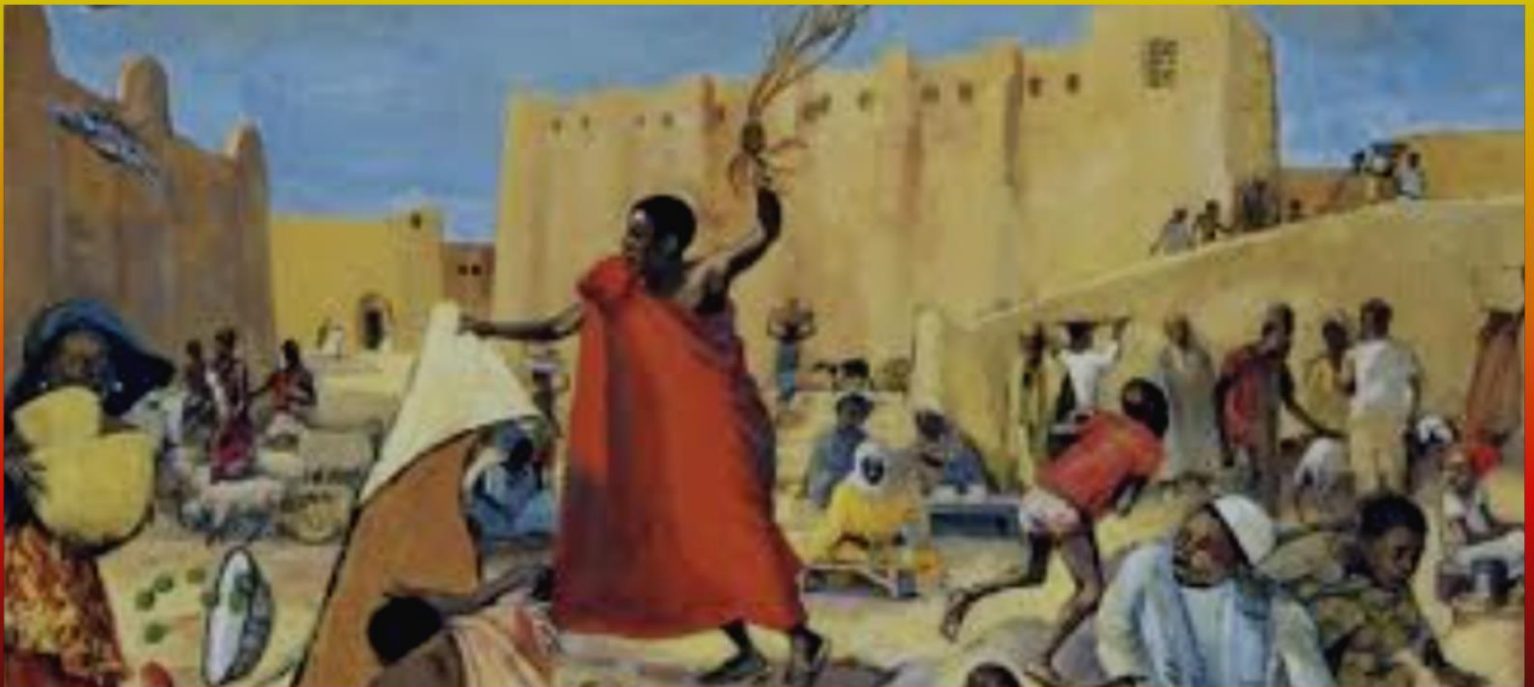


February 27

Matthew 21:12,13

“Den of Thieves”



¹² And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew

**the tables of the
moneychangers, and
the seats of them that
sold doves, ¹³ And said
unto them, **It is written,
My house shall be
called the house of
prayer; but ye have
made it a den of thieves.****

[Mark 11:15-17,
Luke 19:45, 46, John 2:13-22]

After all the years from the
time these words were first
recorded, what has

changed? The den of thieves
still thrives. True houses of
prayer are nearly
non-existent.

Even online, where there
could be godly places of
sound doctrine, prayer, and
worship, the few truly
saintly sites are often
systematically and
purposefully hidden.

What are we to make of a
scriptural passage about
crooks when many places,
from churches, to cities, to

whole countries, are
inundated by thieves—
and some are even led
by them?

It's easy to read this passage
and say, "Well, duh!
Tell me something I don't
already know."

However, these words may
serve as encouragement for
believers to pray. They can
provide a picture of the way
things *should be* in contrast
to the way they, too
commonly, are. They

acknowledge the hypocrisy
of the *so-called “good old
days” or “Bible days”* so we
won’t become naively
nostalgic about the way
things were in the past.

They also let some of us
know that a “synagogue” or
“church” or any religious
gathering, may not be the
safe place we may
want to believe it is.

These words keep us
mindful that secret groups
of robbers did then, and still

do, exist. Even many of the sacred places, religious groups, and locations which are designated as being for prayer and worship of God are, in fact, dens of thieves.

Jesus threw the religious money-makers out of one temple.

For most of us, the best we can do is to come out from among them (2 Corinthians 6:17) when we discover that our holy places are really

places where thieves
congregate, manipulate,
and annihilate faith.

We may go from church
to church, from one
denomination to another,
or from one entire religion
to another, but there may
be no escaping the den
of thieves.